



# The STEWARD

North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation

*This month's publication paid for by New River Community Partners*

Michael F. Easley  
Governor

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William G. Ross Jr.  
Secretary, DENR

## TRUST FUND GRANTS SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM REACHES INTO NEARLY ALL NC COUNTIES

In its eighth year of providing grants, the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund has now reached into 306 local communities in 96 of the state's 100 counties, helping to create projects from modest neighborhood parks to ambitious greenway networks and all-purpose community centers.

That's the tally after the latest round of grant awards by the Parks and Recreation Authority at its quarterly meeting May 16. Thirty-eight local governments will receive grants of \$6.52 million through the third quarter of the 2002-03 funding cycle.

Since the program began, \$46.61 million in matching grants has been channeled into cities, towns and counties.

The trust fund's existence helps cities refine their open space and recreation goals and nurtures fledgling recreation programs in small communities and rural towns.

"Unless that grant is hanging out there as a carrot, many local governments are so cash strapped that they simply



*THIS POPULAR PARK IN HOLLY SPRINGS WAS A TRUST FUND PROJECT.*

may not come up with the money they need for parks," said Mike Waters, executive director of the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Society.

The NC General Assembly created the trust fund in 1994 on the heels of a successful bond issue that raised \$35 million for state parks projects. The fund is supported through a portion of the state's excise tax on real estate deed transfers.

Trust fund allocations are split between state and local

recreation needs, with 65 percent earmarked for state parks land acquisition and capital projects. Thirty percent is set aside for local grants and the remaining five percent supports beach access projects.

The 11-member Parks and Recreation Authority represents all areas of the state and is appointed by the governor (3 members), the senate president pro-tem (4 members) and the speaker of the house (4 members). Authority members consider dozens of grant applications each year.

Each application is

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for State Parks  
Info and Events***

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# STOKES NAMED TO DISMAL SWAMP POST

Henry Stokes, a veteran state park ranger, has been named superintendent of Dismal Swamp State Park in Camden County.

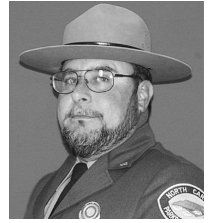
Stokes was formerly a senior ranger at Kerr Lake State Recreation Area and has worked at state parks in northeast North Carolina since 1980.

In announcing the promotion, Lewis Ledford, superintendent of state parks, said, "With his long experience in that part of the state, Henry is well suited to

work with the local community and our Dismal Swamp State Park Advisory Committee in implementing development plans for the park. I'm confident that both he and the park will soon be considered valuable assets in Camden County."

The division is currently developing construction plans for a 6,500-square-foot visitor's center that will serve to open the 14,700-acre park to public use. This initial project will also in-

clude a 40-space parking area on US 17 with foot-traffic access to the visitor's center across an 80-foot, floating bridge on the Dismal Swamp Canal.



The park entrance will be adjacent to the Dismal Swamp Canal Visitor Center on US 17 three miles south of the North Carolina/Virginia border.

In 2002, the Parks and Recreation Authority allocated \$2.4 million for the project from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. Funds were earlier allocated for the design phase of the development. The trust fund directs a portion of the state's excise tax on real estate deed transfers to state parks capital projects and land acquisition.

Stokes, 49, is a native of Hertford and a graduate of Albemarle Academy in Elizabeth City and East Carolina University with a bachelor's degree in parks and recreation management. After serving as a seasonal ranger at William B. Umstead State Park, he joined the parks system fulltime in 1980 as a ranger at Jockey's Ridge State Park. He moved to Pettigrew State Park in 1982 and served 10 years as a Ranger II. Stokes was promoted to Ranger III at Kerr Lake in 1992.

Stokes is certified in advanced law enforcement and environmental education and has had specialized training in search and rescue techniques, flatwater and whitewater canoeing and interpretive programming.

Stokes will establish a temporary office for Dismal Swamp State Park at Merchants Millpond State Park in Gates County in June.

## From The Director's Desk

Any government grants program is only as good as the people who put it to work. A successful one builds credibility and gives confidence to applicants that they'll be treated fairly. I firmly believe the local grants program of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund has been successful in this regard.

And, that's in large measure to the earnest efforts of the Parks and Recreation Authority, which administers the fund, the consultants of Recreation Resources Service (RRS) of North Carolina State University and the staff here in the division.

Early on, the staff developed a comprehensive scoring system for applications that strives for objective evaluations based on factors such as planning, public input, new recreation initiatives and management ability. All of these data, compiled after long hours of research by RRS and staff, is handed to authority members in weighty notebooks during each funding cycle.

The 11 Authority members study the notebooks, often visit sites in their region and, when it comes time to vote, ask many questions of staff and one another. They're always willing to go the extra mile to get and share information.

The Authority as a whole has always been careful to assure a level playing field for both big cities and small towns and for all corners of the state.

As a result, the eight-year-old program has a high success rate with many projects completed, few matching grants returned and always more requests than funds to fill them. And, many local governments whose applications are denied have the confidence to try again.

My personal thanks go to all of these people who've had a part in this success story.

Sincerely,

**Phil**

Philip K. McKnelly



# STATE HAS PARTNERS AT NEW RIVER

New River Community Partners is pleased to sponsor this issue of *The Steward*. New River Community Partners was established in 1998 following the designation of the New River as one of 14 American Heritage Rivers in the nation.

We are a non-profit organization that works to improve the quality of life in the New River basin counties of Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga by protecting our natural resources and helping residents improve the quality of life of the region.

We firmly believe North Carolina's state parks and natural areas are precious state treasures to be valued, protected and supported not only by our state agencies but also by the citizens of our state. We all need to participate in expanding the opportunities and protecting the uniqueness of each of our state's natural jewels.

New River Community Partners is proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with New River State Park and Mt. Jefferson State Natural Area in preserving a piece of heaven on earth for future generations to know and enjoy.

New River Community Partners has written and received grants in recent years for riverbank stabilization, education and land acquisition. Currently, we are continuing our partnership with New River State Park and the NC Division of Parks and Recreation to stabilize another section of riverbank and address our number one water quality issue – sedimentation.



We are also pleased to join our region's land trusts, with the support of the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, in a uniquely focused effort to strategically acquire new land and conservation easements in proximity to New River State Park. Our land preservation specialist will help the Division of Parks and Recreation work through the backlog of land acquisition priorities for the state park units in our region. We hope this project will serve as a partnership model for land protection in other areas of the state.

New River Community Partners is committed, as our state's constitution says, "to preserve as part of the common heritage of this State its open lands and places of beauty." As an organization, we are dedicated to preserving and protecting our legacy in the New River basin, and we will continue to be a partner with state parks in seeing our unique places reach their full potential.

## CANOEING THE LUMBER

*HARRIET FARRIOR OF THE NC PARKS AND RECREATION AUTHORITY LAUNCHES ONTO THE LUMBER RIVER FOR A SHORT CANOE TRIP. A NUMBER OF AUTHORITY MEMBERS AND DIVISION STAFFERS VISITED LUMBER RIVER STATE PARK FOLLOWING AN AUTHORITY MEETING IN THE REGION IN MAY.*



# TRUST FUND

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subjected to a complex scoring system by staff of the NC Division of Parks and Recreation and the Recreation Resources Service of North Carolina State University. The system weighs factors such as planning, site suitability, public input and long-term management ability.

The scoring system strives to create a level field for small towns and large cities. Grants – which are matched 100 percent locally – have been as small as \$10,000. The maximum allowed is \$250,000.

The system worked for Lewisville, a bedroom community near Winston-Salem, which completed a trust fund project in the mid-1990s.

Lewisville was newly incorporated in 1991 when residents envisioned a town square park that would give the place a sense of identity. Like other small towns, Lewisville hustled to raise matching funds for its \$250,000 grant application from private donations and money-raising events as well as from town coffers.

“I cannot really stress how important that grant was,” said town spokeswoman Lynn Hall. “It was a very critical time for Lewisville. We didn’t want strip development. We wanted a small town

ambiance and everything we’ve done has trickled out from that square.”

The project, Shallowford Square, offers a pavilion, an amphitheater, a walking trail, picnic areas and a playground on about four acres. It “creates a sense of community,” Hall said, and has inspired the town to stage events there and plan for more public buildings in the area.

Recreation professionals estimate that local parks and recreation needs throughout North Carolina total more than \$1 billion.

The trust fund’s grant program has become a dependable source for small towns and cities alike, Waters said. In the current funding cycle, 11 applications came from governments that had been awarded grants in the past.

Because it’s a dedicated fund, local governments can depend on it being there long-term, and that is crucial when planning expensive, multi-year projects, he said. “The application process also rewards local governments for master planning and ongoing maintenance.

“And, in some of the larger towns, these grants help them purchase land that may not be there tomorrow.”

## FORT MACON DEDICATION

*A US COAST GUARD DETAIL, TOP, OPENS CEREMONIES APRIL 27 TO DEDICATE A \$12.3 MILLION PROJECT TO RENOVATE FORT MACON AND ADD MUSEUM-QUALITY EXHIBITS. THE PROJECT AT FORT MACON STATE PARK TOOK ABOUT FOUR YEARS AND INVOLVED REMOVING ALL THE EARTHWORKS ATOP THE 168-YEAR-OLD LANDMARK AND REPLACING 350,000 POUNDS OF LEAD SHEETING THAT WAS PART OF THE DRAINAGE SYSTEM. REPAIRS WERE MADE TO THE SALLEYPORT-AND-BRIDGE ENTRANCE, GUNMOUNTS, MILLWORK, AND BRONZE STAIR RAILINGS. THE WORK WAS COMPLETED AT ABOUT \$2 MILLION BELOW BUDGET ESTIMATES. THE DEDICATION WAS PART OF THE ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL STAGED BY FRIENDS OF FORT MACON. AT BOTTOM RIGHT, MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS GROUP AND OFFICIALS OF THE NC DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION CUT A RIBBON OPENING THE EXHIBITS.*



# GORGES MASTER PLAN UNVEILED

A master plan for Gorges State Park, unveiled in April for Transylvania County officials and the media, dictates that the park will remain a “wilderness experience” type park with stringent standards for development.

That decision follows one of the most comprehensive packages of pre-development studies ever conducted for public land in the state, a process that has taken more than two years.

Development at Gorges State Park will be restricted to low-impact recreational facilities in the more easily accessible fringe areas of the 7,092-acre park in Transylvania County. Those areas lie along the western and eastern borders. The master plan directs the focus of the park toward family camping, backcountry exploring and day-use activities such as picnicking, hiking, sightseeing and horseback riding.

“The rugged terrain and sensitive nature of the Gorges suggested restrictions on development as did many responses from citizens during public meetings on the master plan,” said Phil McKnelly, director of the NC Division of Parks and Recreation. “Our challenge has been to develop a plan that balances the demand for recreation there with our mandate to protect important natural resources.”

Each state park has a master plan that is, essentially, a blueprint for development of facilities and infrastructure. And, it serves as a guide for future land acquisition and protection. In March 2001, the parks system contracted with Haden-Stanziale P.A., Planners and Landscape Architects, of Charlotte to create the master plan for Gorges State Park with regular input from division planners and natural resource managers.

Gorges State Park was established in 1999 following North Carolina’s purchase of 10,000 acres from Duke Energy Corp. About 3,000 acres of the total is managed by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. The park has more than 20.6 miles of rivers and creeks and 14 named waterfalls. Elevation that rises 2,000 feet in about three miles and annual average rainfall of more than 80 inches a year help support an estimated 46 rare plant and animal species.

The parks system developed interim facilities, including an entrance road, parking and picnic areas, primitive campsites and hiking trails, that were designed to be altered or, if need be, erased from the landscape once the master plan was complete. Since 1999, park staff increased to five including Superintendent Steve Pagano, two rangers, a

maintenance mechanic and an administrative assistant.

During this time, as part of the planning process, the unique natural communities within the park were subject to detailed mapping and intense scientific scrutiny. Initial inventories examined topography, soils, site ecology, adjacent land use, archaeology and significant physical and environmental constraints.

In addition, detailed natural resource inventories were conducted for rare vascular plants, geologic patterns, timber rattlesnakes, small mammals, amphibians, fish communities and stream habitat, natural plant communities, birds and the endangered plant species Fraser’s loosestrife.

“Given that this land had not seen any development for decades and that our decisions would affect protection of the land for decades to come, we wanted to base those decisions on the best science available,” said Carol Tingley, chief of planning and natural resources for the division.

“We tried to document all the elements of this rare ecosystem that might have some influence, positive or negative, on where and how we build facilities,” she said.

The major components of the master plan include a 2.3-mile, one-way loop road into the western interior of the park. This thoroughway will lead to family camping with 30 tent sites and 14 recreational vehicle sites on two camping loops. Recreational vehicles will be limited to 25 feet in length including tow vehicle.

Also planned is a 7,500-square-foot visitor’s center, similar to ones recently built at other state parks, and two picnic areas with shelters. These facilities, a maintenance compound and barracks for seasonal employees will be clustered near the park’s main entrance from NC 281.

A second access from Frozen Creek Road to the east will serve primarily as an entry point for equestrians and backpackers and will be expanded to include a new gravel parking area, picnic area, primitive campsites and maintenance/vehicle storage.

Day-use parking within the park will be limited to 494 vehicles.

As for all state parks, the timing of full development of facilities will depend on funding priorities set throughout the system. The cost of all capital improvements listed in the master plan—based on current construction costs—is estimated at \$12.02 million.



# AMEN CORNER

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## **A COMPILATION OF RECENT COMMENTS CONCERNING THE DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION AND ITS EMPLOYEES**

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*THE FOLLOWING LETTER IS WRITTEN TO MARK MILLER,  
PARK RANGER I, AT ENO RIVER STATE PARK.*

Thank you for the excellent job that you did while leading our kindergarten class on an Eno River hike to find out about trees. You are a natural born teacher! You were so smart to ask us to divide the children into four groups so that each group could explore a tree and report back to the others about their findings. They especially enjoyed being able to bring back natural treasures for further exploration in class. In talking about our Eno adventure, many of them remember what you showed us and told us about the trees and animals. As you will see from their individual letters to you, there is no substitute for direct experience with a ranger who knows about your topic!

Marilyn Ornstein and Susan McClanahan  
Duke School Kindergarten Teachers

*THE FOLLOWING IS A LETTER WRITTEN ABOUT MICHAEL  
JACKSON, A MAINTENANCE MECHANIC III AT LAKE  
WACCAMAW STATE PARK.*

Dear Mr. Dousharm,

We wanted to send you a note of appreciation for the courtesy and professionalism of . . . Michael Jackson during a recent kayak trip from Lake Waccamaw to Old Dock on this past Sunday, March 2.

Ranger Jackson was extremely knowledgeable of the area and took time to make sure that we were experienced and prepared for our trip. In addition, he gave us his cell phone number just in case we got in trouble and even said he would swing by Old Dock when he got off work to make sure we had finished our trip and picked up our car.

Needless to say we were very grateful for his concern for our safety and display of professionalism. It was a great trip and uneventful with regard to snakes or getting lost, with the exception of numerous downed trees.

Michael Eller and Lee Smyre  
Oak Island, NC

*FOLLOWING IS A LETTER WRITTEN ABOUT STAFF AT  
JOCKEY'S RIDGE STATE PARK.*

I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the efforts and endeavors of two of your employees. On many occasions, particularly in state government, we only hear the negative aspects associated with employee actions and service. When someone goes the extra mile, we often dismiss it as "part of the job" but in this case, I want to be sure you are aware of the fine work being accomplished by Kelley Thompson and Jeff Bachman.

Our Boy Scout Troop 528 from Sandston, Virginia recently visited the Outer Banks area as part of our summer camping experience. While there, we were able to enjoy many activities. One of these activities was a kayaking program conducted by Kelley and Jeff. It was nice to see their enthusiasm and expertise as they worked with our boys. The fun we had made the 115-degree heat index seem nonexistent... well, almost!

In this time of budget cuts and downsizing, it is sometimes difficult to maintain facilities or justify continuing certain programs. It was obvious that you place an important emphasis on both. Please know that we appreciate the resources your agency allocates to the activity in which we participated. Likewise, we appreciate the contributions made by employees like Kelley and Jeff, to ensure an enjoyable and educational experience.

Please pass on our thanks to Kelley and Jeff for a job well done! Thank you!

Captain R. W. Mawyer  
Department of Game and Inland Fisheries  
Commonwealth of Virginia

*THIS LETTER CONCERNS GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK STAFF.*

...Please pass along a message for me. Could you please tell Debo (Cox) that my girlfriend and I enjoyed Sunday's hike. I was very interested in how different he and Jay (Greenwood) are. Jay spent much more time on the plant and animal life during last month's hike that we went along on, where Debo talked a lot about the history of the park.

Both are very interesting and offer completely different perspectives on life in and around the park. It is a nice change of pace from other parks where guides tend to tell the same story over and over, so that by our second or third trip you have memorized it. We look forward to future hikes and are trying to get some of our friends to start joining us. Thanks again!

Lawrence K.

# NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT 2003

PARK	% CHANGE					
	APRIL 2003	TOTAL YTD APR. 2003	APRIL 2002	TOTAL YTD APR. 2002	(2002/2003) APR. YTD	
CAROLINA BEACH	21,975	61,997	19,898	56,036	10%	11%
CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE	10,161	24,810	10,050	27,818	1%	-11%
CROWDERS MOUNTAIN	19,314	64,032	31,998	96,158	-40%	-33%
ENO RIVER	30,166	77,549	29,970	95,894	1%	-19%
OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN	3,839	4,350	3,570	10,668	8%	-59%
FALLS LAKE	47,662	115,251	88,643	162,127	-46%	-29%
FORT FISHER	69,989	176,339	110,358	296,903	-37%	-41%
FORT MACON	112,910	263,766	120,150	312,736	-6%	-16%
GOOSE CREEK	11,843	38,023	15,427	46,813	-23%	-19%
GORGES	5,864	17,000	10,753	28,982	-45%	-41%
HAMMOCKS BEACH	12,555	37,311	15,246	41,982	-18%	-11%
HANGING ROCK	28,260	68,776	33,024	84,381	-14%	-18%
JOCKEY'S RIDGE	90,995	248,664	79,937	182,912	14%	36%
JONES LAKE	10,826	27,598	7,148	21,156	51%	30%
JORDAN LAKE	35,520	69,365	156,857	317,052	-77%	-78%
KERR LAKE	93,480	226,040	176,384	368,512	-47%	-39%
LAKE JAMES	14,450	37,824	21,175	54,905	-32%	-31%
LAKE NORMAN	35,745	77,083	37,062	95,246	-4%	-19%
LAKE WACCAMAW	6,868	25,564	11,208	30,232	-39%	-15%
LUMBER RIVER	6,795	14,240	6,108	13,383	11%	6%
MEDOC MOUNTAIN	3,864	7,728	4,556	12,712	-15%	-39%
MERCHANTS MILLPOND	15,983	29,558	11,205	29,617	43%	0%
MORROW MOUNTAIN	20,314	58,538	52,640	118,620	-61%	-51%
MOUNT JEFFERSON	6,512	24,024	7,076	20,842	-8%	15%
MOUNT MITCHELL	22,296	39,163	35,163	60,129	-37%	-35%
NEW RIVER	7,668	26,856	7,600	27,480	1%	-2%
PETTIGREW	11,389	28,618	7,112	18,325	60%	56%
PILOT MOUNTAIN	28,147	82,940	35,309	100,892	-20%	-18%
RAVEN ROCK	12,422	33,785	13,502	37,408	-8%	-10%
SINGLETERY LAKE	1,584	4,019	1,617	3,637	-2%	11%
SOUTH MOUNTAINS	16,710	43,076	17,120	45,678	-2%	-6%
STONE MOUNTAIN	21,376	67,224	35,916	116,228	-40%	-42%
WEYMOUTH WOODS	2,812	9,870	3,250	9,872	-13%	0%
WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD	31,987	79,105	38,912	127,727	-18%	-38%
<b>SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL</b>	<b>872,281</b>	<b>2,210,086</b>	<b>1,255,944</b>	<b>3,073,063</b>	<b>-31%</b>	<b>-28%</b>

# Mission

The mission of the North Carolina  
Division of Parks & Recreation is:

to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;

to provide and promote outdoor recreation  
opportunities throughout North Carolina;

*and*

to exemplify and encourage good steward-  
ship of North Carolina's natural resources

for all citizens and visitors of North  
Carolina.

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**WWW.NCSPARKS.NET FOR PARKS INFO AND EVENTS**

## SAFETY ZONE

Beat the heat  
this summer

- β Take a break from outdoor activity every 15-20 minutes and drink plenty of water.
- β Use sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more, even on cloudy days.
- β Stay inside or in the shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- β Be alert for early signs of heat sickness: muscle cramps, intense thirst, headache, dizziness and nausea.



### *The Steward*

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